

## THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER AND SOCIAL CULTURAL FACTORS ON PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AMONG TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN GBOKO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF BENUE STATE

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### Abstract

The research examined the influence of gender and socio-cultural factors on prosocial behaviour among tertiary institutions in Gboko Local Government Area of Benue State. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A sample size of 361 students was used and data analysed using Pearson moment product correlation. Prosocial tendencies measures (P.T.M) developed by Johnson (1989) and primary prevention awareness, attitudes measures scale (PPAAMS, Swiser 1985) used to assess helping. Three hypotheses were tested and gender significantly influenced prosocial behaviour [ $t(307)=3.7.21$ ;  $P<.05$ ]. There was a significant effect of socio-cultural factors on prosocial

behaviour [ $f(305)= 4, 357$ ;  $P<.05$ ]. Thirdly, there was no significant interactive effect of gender and socio-cultural factors on prosocial behaviour among students of tertiary institutions in Gboko local government area of Benue State [ $f(2, 302)=1.033$ ;  $P>.05$ ]. It was recommended that, effective cognitive therapy be put in place to increase prosocial behaviour in students with severe anti-social behaviour. Training opportunities should also be put in place, and designed to teach social problems solving skills.

**Keywords:** Gender, Gboko, prosocial behaviour tertiary institution, Socio-cultural factors, .

### Introduction

Many psychologists in different perspectives, developmental and evolutionary, have developed numerous standard tasks in order to investigate development in different domains of pro-social behaviour such as informing (Chargam et al, 2006), (Weeken & Tomasello, 2006), comforting (Bischolwer, 2012) sharing (House et al 2013) and cooperating (e.g. Human, Warmeken, Greenberg & Tomaselle, 2011). The development in these domain has been intensely investigated in children from urban contexts in western societies and also in chimpanzees (Wameken & Tomasello, 2006; Hamana, Wameken, Greenberg & Tomasello, 2011) in particular. Helping behaviour in humans ranges from generous selfless acts to ignoring real needs social psychologists became more interested and concerned with the factors associated with helping behaviour. Several factors are involved in whether or not someone chooses to help another individual in different situations.

Prosocial behaviour is defined as behaviour directed towards promoting the wellbeing of another

person such as caring, helping, sharing and volunteering. Prosocial behaviour may originate and be motivated by concern about the welfare of others and the rights of others. It is central to human social functioning. Prosocial behaviour fosters positive traits that are beneficial for children and society. Encouraging prosocial behaviour may also require decreasing or eliminating undesirable social behaviours. Helping behaviour in human ranges from generous selfless acts to ignoring real needs.

Social psychologists became more interested and concerned with the factors associated with helping behaviour. The amalgamation of psychobiological and social influences affects prosocial behaviour. A multitude of environmental forces may influence prosocial behaviour; for example, siblings and peers (Hastings, & Sullivan, 2007) friends, especially if the effective quality of the friendship is high. Prosocial thoughts and feelings may be defined as a sense of responsibility for other individuals and a higher likelihood of experiencing empathy both affectively and cognitively. Biological and environmental perspectives on the origins of the emotions and behaviour comprise prosocial developmental approaches to demonstrating how children's prosocial behaviour could be shaped through adult actions.

Authors evaluate the roles of various agents of socialisation, including parents, siblings, peers,

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teachers, community and culture in the development of prosocial characteristics (Scorfield John, Martin & McGuffin, 2006; Cario, et al, 2007). Prosocial behaviour in childhood often begins with questions of sharing and fairness. Encouraging youth to engage in kind acts however may have benefits and personal happiness as prosocial behaviour predicts academic achievement and social acceptance in adolescent. The dearth of work on enhancing happiness and prosociality in youth, coupled with evidence of their many benefits highlight the desirability of extending research to this age group like all stages of human development. During adolescence, teens often struggle with their body changes, mood swings and social issues. The end of this developmental period is tied more to social and emotional factors and can be somewhat ambiguous. Adolescence is a vital period in social development because adolescents can be easily influenced by the people they develop close relationship with. The relationship adolescent have with their peers, family and members of their social sphere plays a vital role in their social development. Two major socialisation agents in children's lives are the family environment and formal educational institutions. It is the family, in its function as a primary socialisation of the child, that predominates in the first five years of life. Middle childhood by contrast is characterised by a child's readiness for school, being self-assured and interested, knowing what kind of behaviour is expected being able to wait to follow directions, and getting along with other children.

Despite changing family roles during adolescence, the home environment and parents are still important for the behaviour and choices of adolescents. As an adolescent's social sphere develops rapidly, they distinguish between friends and acquaintances, and they often become heavily and emotionally investigative with friends. It is somewhat ironic that the term 'gender' which was first coined by psychologists and then used by feminists to get away from the biologist referent of the word 'sex' is now virtually synonymous with the later word. Yet by using 'gender' we are using a short-hand term which encodes a very crucial point that our basic social identities as men and women are socially constructed rather than based on fixed biological characteristics.

In this sense, we can talk about societies in which there are more than two genders (and in the anthropological record, there are several such

societies) as well as the historical differences in masculinity (femininity) in a given society (Young, 1988). Although critical scholars no longer attribute value to societies in terms of progress or backwardness today, they do recognise that pre-colonial societies may have been at different stages of social development. These stages are usually described in relation to the productions that predominated at the time. Like all schemes, however, these descriptions provide only a partial understanding. Most societies cannot be neatly classified into one category or another. Many show signs of being at more than one stage. In addition, it must be stressed that all societies do not necessarily pass through all the recognised stages (Blackden, 1993).

Differences between men and women at socio-cultural level highlight natural specific aspects (men are competitive assertive, during visual and auditory associations, while women have superior emotional intelligence, networking, competitive and abstract thinking). Also for women, it is more important what they are while for men, it is more important what they do, which do not justify at all the value differences (Stanculescu, 2009; Hofstede et al, 2012). Being physically or mentally different does not mean one is superior or inferior. This is exactly what feminism is trying to explain. We may notice a difference in the more development of women than men in the sense that values such as fairness and equality matter more for men. In this case, we may talk about a morality or justice. Women value more the protection from pain, which rather characterizes a moral responsibility (Gilligan, Upudmeichiore et al, 2004). We cannot generalize because there are differences between culture as musicality femininity dimension reveals.

Cultural determinism is a reality developed by many theories explaining default assimilation of socio-cultural values of individuals and their influence on attitudes, mentalities, perceptions and their behaviour. Obviously, the level of cultures are multiple and each level has influence to some extent in what comes from the socio-cultural which is considered to have the strongest influence, but there are cultural dominance with origin in ethnicity, religious training, (Nicoleta, 2015). We say in general because quite a few phenomenon occurs currently that cannot be associated or can not necessarily be associated with the notional culture, even if they indicate the importance of a common cultural background for the members of

a group that make up a community (including a virtual one). Other levels of culture or combinations of values set their fundamental and joint activities, one of being determined by belonging to a particular gender (Niculeta, 2015).

Hosstede (2015) claims that socio-culture and gender are more deeply rooted in human minds occupational cultures which are learned at school, or at work. These deeper rooted cultures are particularly acquired in the earliest years of life, Costa, McMrae (1992).

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Hoested, (2011) claims that socio-culture and gender are more deeply rooted in human minds than occupational cultures, which are learned at school or at work. These deeper rooted cultures are particularly acquired in the earliest years of life. Costa and Macrae (1992) examined a correlation from five personality dimension to country norms and to national dimension cultural scores, based on a panel, including 30 countries. The main finding was that culture and personality are linked. However, these relationships should not be used to stereotype the individual by only using cultural scores, because each individual grows up with unique events.

One important and intuitive aspect impacting personality is how gender roles are defined in national culture. Gender roles are associated with a certain position within a household that frames different patterns of decision process, decisions regarding

education. Women often have lower bargaining positions within the household for several reasons. A major aspect is that women have fewer opportunities in the labour market which is in particular true in developing countries (Dufflo, 2011). Another, aspect is that in many cultures, girls are associated with additional costs such as the bride's dowry. These different expectations lead to different behaviours, shown within the household towards boys and girls, their health care. In poor families in New Delhi, a study by Khanna, Kumar, Vaghela, Streenivas and Puliyel (2003) shows that girls are twice as likely to die from diarrhoea. It furthermore, shows that girls' overall health level is worst compared to boys, concerning marginalized families naturally. This unequal treatment also affects their personalities from their earliest years onwards.

Gender is one of the most consistent correlates of pro-social behavior. Across many studies, girls and women have been found to be more pro-social than boys and men (Whiting & Whiten, 1975). For example, peers and teachers have been found to describe pre-school age, kindergarten age, and elementary school age girls as more pro-social than boys. Changes in fertility and its timing are possible indicators for changed cultures and its impact on pro-social behavior of an individual. Different studies show that when education become more important in modern labour markets, women become less frequently and at a higher age pregnant. One reason is that economic development provides more jobs suitable for women. This can be observed in Saudi-Arabia where women are prepared in their education for an office job where they do not have much contact with men but can still be productive factors in the economy (Hailgan, 2016 and Arab News, 2015).

Other examples are the known rise in factory work in China or jobs in the telecommunication industry in India, where more and suitable work places for women were created. Regarding India, there is an interesting change happening, that girls from lower castes to girls from higher caste in the rate of being instructed in English. Munshi and Rosouzweig (2006) found that the lower caste girls are more likely to be educated in English compared to boys from lower castes. This has very intuitive and cultural based reason. Boys are expected to rely on the caste system and its networks, meaning the old-man and their life paths are somewhat pre-social expectations. Girls however do

not face such group's expectations for the labour market and can therefore profit from English Education and better marketplace opportunities. This changes in human capital leads to a change in society and culture; because it changes the bargaining situation within lower castes women and between women course from different castes, because the modern market usually does not differentiate between castes but rather between skills. Moreover, education changes the mind and makes people critical towards tradition.

Culture influences language and human behaviour. The social condition in which individuals are born and live shapes their attitudes, emotional and behavioural reactions and the perceptions about what is happening around. The same applies in the case of assigned roles in society based on gender. The presentation of these issues from the inter-disciplinary perspectives is the subject of this article. In order to extensively look into these realities, this research therefore investigated the influence of gender and socio-cultural factors on pro-social behaviour among tertiary institutions.

### **Statement of The Problem**

Pro-social thoughts and feelings may be defined as a sense of responsibility for other individuals and a higher likelihood of experience, empathy both affectively. This research investigated whether individual cultural perspectives could affect the origins of the emotions and behaviour, to demonstrate how pro-social behaviour could be shaped through actions. It evaluated the roles of gender and culture in the development of personal characteristics (Scorfield, John, Martin & McGuffin, 2006; Carlo et al, 2007). Girls with high capacity for empathy were considered more pro-social; they had a high positive global self-concept. There was also significant correlation between self-concept and cooperative behavior (Caulley & Tyler, 1989). Low correlation and negative relationship exists between pro-social behavior and stress perception (Albert and Thilagavathy, 2014). Some studies on correlation were also done to compare gender biases. One study showed that females scored significantly, higher in both affective and cognitive components of empathy and in pro-social responsibility (Garuigrdoail, 2009). These reviews have provided guidelines for future research on pro-social development to include a broader array

of authentic behaviours of young adolescents in the higher institutions. And after reviewing these studies, the researcher seeks to know whether gender and socio-cultural factors have impact on pro-social behaviour of students in tertiary institutions.

### **Objectives of The Study**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To investigate the antecedents of pro-social behaviour.
2. To investigate the impact of culture on pro-social behaviour, demonstrating level of students involvement.
3. To invest the relationship between gender and pro-social behaviour.
4. To make any suggestions for further research.

### **Statement of The Hypotheses**

The following statements of hypotheses were formulated for the study:

1. There will be a significant difference between gender and pro-social behaviour among students in tertiary institutions of Benue State.
2. There will be a significant difference between socio-cultural factors and pro-social behaviour among students in tertiary institutions of Benue State.
3. Gender will significantly influence pro-social behaviour among students of tertiary institutions of Benue state.
4. Socio-cultural factors will significantly influence pro-social behaviour among students in tertiary institutions of Benue State.

### **Design**

The research design used in this study is descriptive survey design. Descriptive survey design is a method of gathering information about human population in which direct contact is made with the unit of study, through the means of questionnaire, interview or observation. With this design, the researcher was able to assess the perceived influence of socio-cultural factors on sports performance.

### **Scope/Setting of The Study**

The study was limited to Gboko Local Government Area of Beue State tertiary institutions and more emphasis was on Fidel Polytechnic to verify and investigate the level of influence of gender and socio-

cultural factors of pro-social display of character of students of the institution. The setting of the research was Fidel Polytechnic Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria.

### **Participants**

The participants for this study consisted of 361 students of Fidel Polytechnic Gboko, Benue State, Nigeria.

### **Instruments**

The following instruments were used for the study:

1. Pro-social tendencies measure: The pro-social tendencies measure is a 23 item version developed by Johnson (1989) which consists of 6 subscales: public (4 items, Cronbach's 0.80); anonymous (5 items, Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.88$ ); dire (3 items, Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.54$ ); emotional (4 items, Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.77$ ); compliant (2 items, Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.87$ ); and altruism (5 items, Cronbach's  $\alpha=0.62$ ).
2. Helping Behaviour Measures: The pro-social behaviour subscale from the primary preventions awareness attitudes (PPAAUS; Swisher et al, 1985) was used in assessing helping. This is a 6-item scale that includes items tapping into volunteering in a charitable organization, helping a friend with a problem, raising or donation of money, sharing in household tasks and doing favours or lending money to others. Responses could range from 1 (never happened) to 6 (happened almost every day).
3. Altruistic Behaviour Measures: this altruism scale developed by Johnson et al (1989) was included. The items from the scale were classified post-hoc into 5 categories of pro-social behaviour by group of psychologists on the basis of the nature of sacrifice (Johnson et al, 1989). The 5 categories were time plus effort of pain, money or goals, risks of harm, loss of status.

### **Conceptual/Theoretical and Empirical Review**

#### **Gender**

The word 'gender' came into main academic use some 15 years after the re-emergence of late 20<sup>th</sup> century featurism, which has, unlike its earlier manifestations, made a significant in male-dominated (endocentric) scholarship. The word 'gender' had a specific usage before feminist theories extended its meaning. One of the earliest use of gender in feminist theory can be

traced to the 1976 University of Sussex workshop on the subordination of women and the school of thought that emerged from this workshop. Scholars such as Oliver, Harris, Maureen, Mazkintosh, Felicity, Odium, Ann, Whitehead and Kateyoung argued that women, like men, are biological beings but that women's subordination was socially constructed and not biologically determined.

They argued further that to conceptualize differences between these two realities, it is necessary to identity sex as the biological differentiation between male and female and gender as the differentiation between masculinity and femininity as constructed through socialization and education among other factors. What is biological is fixed and unchangeable but what is social is subject to change and should be the focus of attention for feminist theorists.

Gender according to Pollard and Morgan (2002) refers to the socially constructed expectation for male and female behaviour which prescribes a division of labour and responsibilities between males and females of different rights and obligation to them. Gender also describes social and historical constructs for Masculine and Feminine, behaviours, attributes and ideologies which connote some notion of biological sex (Azikiwe, 2001). Weac (1977) opined that gender is not a pool of attributes possessed by a person, but something a person does and varies between different radicalized ethic and religious groups as well as for members of different social classes. According to Thorne et al, (1983), the term 'gender' does not refer to grammatical gender (the system to be found in some language of organizing certain world class into contrasting categories of masculine, feminine, neuter) but refers to social categories based on sex which encompassed behaviour, roles and images that, although not biologically determined, are regarded by society as appropriate to its male and female members.

Gender is therefore distinguished from sex in that sex refers to a biological component of male and female, whereas gender component is what is socially learned and acquired. Gender is the range of characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between masculinity and femininity. Depending on the context, these characteristics may include biological sex (i.e the state of being male, female or an intersex variation, sex-based social-structures, (i.e, gender roles, or gender identity; most cultures use a gender binary, having two genders boys/men/women: and

girls/women). Those who exist outside these groups fall under the umbrella term of non-binary or gender queer. Some societies have specific gender besides “men” and “women” such as the Hirras of South Asia; these are often referred to as third genders (and fourth genders etc) (Udry, 1994).

Sexologist John introduced the terminological distinction between biological sex and gender as a role in 1955. Before his work, it was uncommon to use the word gender to refer to anything but grammatical categorizes. However, many meaning of the world did not become widespread until the 1970s, when feminist theory embraced the concept of a distinction between biological sex and the social contract of gender. Today, the distinction is followed in some contexts, especially the social sciences and documents written by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

### **Socio-Cultural**

The term 'socio-cultural system' embraces three concepts; society, culture and system. A society is a number of inter-dependent organisations of the same species. A culture is the learned behaviours that are shared by the members of a society, together with the material products of such behaviours. The words 'society' and 'culture' are fused together to form the word “socio-cultural”. A system is a collection of points which interact with each other to function as a whole (Kawffman, 1980). The term socio-cultural system is most likely to be found in the writings of anthropologists who specialize in ecological anthropology. In 1979, Marvin Harris outlined a universal structure of socio-cultural systems. He mentioned infrastructure (production and population), structure (which is behavioural, like corporations, political organizations, hierarchies, causes), and a super structure (which is mental, like beliefs, values, norms (Elwell, 2013).

Socio-cultural is used in fields such as psychology and is used to describe awareness of circumstances surrounding individuals and how their behaviours are affected specifically by their surroundings, as well as social and cultural factors. According to Catherine Sanderson (2010), socio-cultural perspective describe people's behaviour and mental processes as shaped in part by their social and cultural contract, including race, gender and nationality. Socio-cultural perspective theory is a broad yet significant aspect of our existence. It applies to every area of our lives. How

we communicate, understand, relate and cope with one another is partially based on this theory. Our spiritual, physical, emotional, and physiological condition are all influenced by factors studied by socio-cultural perspective theory.

### **Pro-Social Behaviour**

Pro-social behaviour or voluntary behaviour intends to bring benefit to another. It is a courses of actions which benefits other people or society as whole, such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating and volunteering. It can also be referred to as a broad category of behaviour that includes an action that provides benefit to others, like following in a game, being honest, and cooperating with others in social situations. These actions may be motivated by empathy and by concerns about the welfare and rights of others, as well as for egoistic or practical concerns (Eisenberg, Fabes and Spinrad, 2006). Pro-social behaviour is a conduct or planned action to help other people, disregarding the helper's motive. It involves sincere assistance (altruism) which is entirely motivated by self-interest. Pro-social activities are any conduct or planned actions to help other people without expecting anything in return (Afolabi, 2013). Pro-social activities involve attention and assistance towards other people or over love, loyalty, service, which are given to other people without any expectation to get something in return (Myers, 1996)

### **Type and Predictors of Pro-Social Behaviour**

Pro-social behaviour is a timely action that tends to help or benefit another individual or group of individuals. The consequences of a person's actions and motivations include sharing, comforting, rescuing and helping. However, investigators have shown that there are different types of pro-social behaviour and that these types are related to different theoretical constructs (Batson, et al, 1991). Eisengerg et al, (1998) identified two types of pro-social behaviour, namely; altruistic pro-social behaviour and public pro-social behaviour. Altruistic pro-social behaviour is defined as voluntary helping motivated primarily by concern for the need or welfare of another, often induced by sympathy responding and internalized normal principles consistent with helping others (Eisenberg and Fabesi, 1990). with this kind of pro-social behaviour, because the helper is primarily concerned with the need of others welfare, this behaviour

sometimes incur a cost to the helper.

Although scholars have debated whether altruistic behaviours exist, there are at least three lines of evidence that support the existence of altruism (Eisenberg et al, 1998). First, researchers have presented evidence of the heritability of sympathy (Batson & Shaw, 1991), which deemed evolutionarily adaptive. Secondly, there is longitudinal evidence of stability in the tendency to behave in childhood and adolescence (Gilbert, and Fisk, 2004), and third, researchers have found significant association between personality variables and pro-social behaviours across different contexts (Eisenberg and Fabes, 1990).

### **Public Pro-social Behaviour**

It is the type in which people are motivated to behave in a progressive manner when in public at least in part, moved by a desire for the approval and respect of others, and as parents and peers, and also to enhance one's self worth (Eisenberg and Fabes, 1990). One common direction in research on pro-social behaviour is to find out whether others serve as witness to the potential pro-social act (Penner, Davidio, Piliawin and Schroeder, 2005). Researchers have shown that helping conduct in front of others is sometimes associated with self-oriented motives, although other researchers have pointed out that social desirability concerns are not necessarily incompatible with pro-social behaviour (Bar-Tall, 1992). Authors who have done some works on pro-social behaviour identified volunteerism as volunteering which involves pro-social action in an organizational context, which is planned and continued for an extended period. They maintain that volunteerism differs from interpersonal helping in many ways, but the most important of these differences is that, relative to interpersonal helping, volunteering is less likely to result from a sense of personal obligation (Eisenberg and Fabes, 1998). That is, whereas most acts of interpersonal helping involves a sense of personal obligation to a particular person, volunteering to work for a charity or service organization is typically not motivated by such considerations.

Another predictor was empathy. Empathy or emotional perspective-taking is generally defined as our ability to understand other people's feelings (Penner, Davidio, Piliawin and Schoeder, 2005). A more specific definition is proposed by Eisenberg, and Fabes (1990). In their view, empathy can be defined by

a set of four conditions we empathise with others when we have;

- a) An affective state
- b) Which is isomorphic to another person's affective state
- c) Which was induced by observing or imagination of another person's affective state and
- d) When we know that the other person's affective state is the source of our own affective state.

Condition (a) is particularly important as it helps to differentiate empathy from materializing which denotes intents and ability to represent other's mental states without emotional involvement.

### **Theoretical Review**

For the purpose of this research, three theories were used which are socio-cultural administration, intercultural adjustment and cognitive approach to gender. Socio-cultural adaptation (Savicki, 2010) asserted that one person is successfully adapted when he or she knows how to behave according to the norms of the foreign culture in which they are living. In addition, Ward (as cited in Savicki, 2010) stated that "socio-cultural adaptation is based on learning the skills and knowledge necessary to reduce the differences with the foreignness of a different culture." Besides, several factors shape the processes of adaptation, including the acculturation stress, the socio-cultural stressors, the contributors to socio-cultural adaptation and the variability of adaptation (Savicki, 2010). Acculturative stress to the disorientation resulted to cross-cultural transition (Saudhu & Asrabadi cited in Yakunina et al, 2013) in which a set of practical, cultural and social difficulties intervened (Yakunina et al, 2013). As students adjust to the host cultures, they may cope with confusing or exciting experiences, scenarios and situations that favour or retrain their adaptation process (Savicki, 2010). Savicki also states that cultural stressors such as social practices, beliefs and language issues are present in each individual experience. The process of adaptation is also related to some contributors that may facilitate the socio-cultural level of adjustment to a new culture, such as having friends from different backgrounds or having some previous travel experience (Bennett, as cited in Savicki, 2010). Savicki asserted that adaptation processes are not the same for everyone. In this sense, individual experiences and

strategies are determinants in the variability of the adaptation process (2010).

### **Intercultural Adjustment**

Matsumoto, Hirayamu and Leroux (2003) conceptualised intercultural adjustment from the primary understanding of adaptation, which is defined as the process of altering one's behaviour to fit in with a changed environment or circumstance or as a response to social pressure. Therefore, the concept of intercultural adjustment sub-represents people's injunctive experiences relation not only to progress of adaption but also to the notion of well-being (Matsumoto et al, 2005). The aforementioned approach emerges as a widened perspectives of intercultural adjustment in which it is assumed that living in a new and different context requires a set of coping skills to deal with the stressful situations that the intercultural contact and change provoke (Ward as cited in Matsumoto et al, 2003). Thus Matsumoto et al (2003) review a group of psychological skills that enable adjustment to new culture scenarios ranging from emotion regulation, to openness, flexibility and critical thinking.

Emotion regulation is the main skill as much as it favours the control, management and regulation of stressful and conflicting inter-cultural situations (Matsumoto et al, 2003). Secondly, critical thinking supports the creation of cultural cognitive and behavioural schemes as a result of interaction (Matsumoto et al, 2003). Also openness and flexibility appear as necessary skills to engage in the process of critical thinking and reorganisation of cognitive frameworks which promote the expansion of individuals' response repertoire to situations and live in new environments (Matsumoto et al, 2003). We consider openness and flexibility to be the most significant skills for this work as they strengthen and complement the psychological domain of the approach to acculturation presented above. However, there is need to further address the social domain of our research in order to extensively and accurately explore the relationship among subjects in social and school contexts.

### **Cognitive Approach to Gender**

The cognitive approach to gender development was initiated and presented by Lawrence Kohlberg which he outlined his cognitive-development theory in

Eleanor Macoby's 1966 book. The development of sex differences, Kohlberg's theory is heavily influenced by Piagetian concepts in that children's understanding of gender is believed to be directly linked to age-related changes in cognitive development. Kohlberg proposed that as children develop an understanding of gender, they become more motivated to match their behaviour to gender. Kohlberg emphasised the significant motivating role of gender constancy, the developed understanding that gender is a permanent and immutable category. Gender constancy knowledge is believed to develop in three stages: knowledge of whether you are a boy or girl (i.e. gender identity), knowledge that gender remains the same throughout life (i.e. gender stability), and knowledge that gender does not change despite superficial changes in appearance or activities (i.e. gender consistency).

### **Theoretical Linkage**

Relating this to the influence of gender and socio-cultural factors in pro-social behaviour among tertiary students, we found out that cultural differences influence pro-social lifestyle of students in the way they dress, speak and react to societal events. While each of the theoretical approaches emphasises different processes, there is some degree of overlap between them and in this research, social cognitive theory recognises the important role of biological factors and evolutionary pressures, biological approaches recognise the role of the environment, and cognitive theories acknowledge the role of biological and environmental factors. Regardless of theoretical preference, most theories and researchers would agree that biological, social and cognitive factors all play role in gender development. From socio-cultural adaptation theory, it was found that several factors shape the pro-social processes of adaptation, including the acculturative stress, the socio-cultural stressors, the contributors to socio-cultural adaptation and the variability of adaptation which brings us to the realities that socio-cultural influence's contributions to tertiary institution students in Benue State are negative to their pro-social relationship in the campuses.

Matsumoto et al (2003) also put forward as reviewed in the inter-cultural adjustment a group of psychological skills that enable adjustment to new cultural scenarios as follows: emotions regulation, openness, flexibility and critical thinking. First, emotion regulation is the main skill as much as it

favours the control, management and regulation of reactions related to stressful and conflicting intercultural situations. Secondly, critical thinking supposed the creator of cultural, cognitive and behavioural schemes as a result of interaction. This implies that culture can be adapted if CD person finds his or herself consistently in a particular society for some period of time.

### **Empirical Review**

#### **Cultural Differences and Pro-social Behaviour**

Cultural differences may influence pro-social behaviour in that a person is likely to help, donate or generally extend a positive gesture to a person based on cultural affiliation. In addition, some cultures have an inherent perspective on pro-social behaviour while others lack the initiative to help, care and share or comfort (Cook, 2012). For example, children in the Israeli Kibbutz community are more cooperative and helpful than American and European children. Also, collectivists indigenous societies such as Polynesian societies have also been found to be more pro-social than western societies. Some individuals socialise to help around the house. For example, children from Kenya, Mexico and Philippines socialise to help in family chores. These same children according to Dowdson (2006), scored highest in helpful behaviours. Americans viewed helping more as a matter of choice whereas Indians saw helping as a moral responsibility.

Cultural differences in relation to pro-social behaviour are expected differently between individuals and collectivistic societies. For instance, someone living in the U.S is least likely to help someone in need than someone living in Australia, India or Nigeria. Cultural differences can be explained by different socialization practices that determine an individual's motive for pro-social behaviour. Miller, Bersoff and Harwood (1990) suggested that collectivist cultures (e.g. Hindu) have a duty-based view of interpersonal responsibilities, and individualist cultures like the U.S have an option-oriented view. Hindus assume a general obligation to help others while Americans perceive helping behaviours being dependent on the nature of the relationship or the level of need. Some evidence suggests that children in western societies are less pro-social than children in other cultures, but some studies find no differences along these lines (see review by Eisenberg, Fries & Spinrad, 2006). A field study by

Levine, Norenzayan and Phibrick (2001) found large cultural difference in spontaneously helping strangers. For example, the proportion of individuals helping a stranger with a hurt leg pick up dropped magazines ranged from 22 percent to 95 percent across 23 cultures.

Although national wealth was negatively associated with helping rates, the closely-related cultural values of individualism-collectivism (individualism is on average higher in richer countries) was not related (Anonymous, 2012). People in collectivist cultures may draw a firmer line between in-groups and out-groups and be more likely to help in-group members and less likely to help out-group members than people from individualistic cultures, who have an independent view of the self. The same way, Simpatia in Latino and Hispanic cultures have range of friendly social and emotional traits. Levine et al. (2001), found that people in cultures that value sympathies were more likely to help in a variety of nonemergency helping situations (Aronson and Aker, 2010).

#### **Influence of Gender and Culture on Pro-social Behaviour**

Under gender factors, gender is one of the most consistent correlates of pro-social behaviour across many studies. Girls and women have been found to be more pro-social than boys and men (Whiting & Whiting, 1975). For example, peers and teachers have been found to describe pre-school age, kindergarten age and elementary school than boys (Akerlud and Kranton, 2000). Eisenberg & Thurfy (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of 16 studies. The study found strong consistent gender differences with females showing greater empathy. Byrnes, Miller and Schafer (1999) also found that females also typically feel greater guilt feelings than males and they spend longer time thinking about the incident that caused the feeling of guilt. A meta-analysis of 99 investigations found that men are more likely to intervene in an emergency. 62% of the structure of a stimulated emergency showed that males were more helpful. Croson and Gneezy (2009) also pointed out that the social preference of women is more situationally-specific than those of men.

Females have more altruistic tendencies; however, males prefer to be more pro-social in public areas (Flynn & Slovic, 1994). Based on stereotypic gender

roles, females generally are expected and believed to be more responsive, empathic, and pro-social than males, whereas males are expected to be relatively more independent and achievement-oriented (Flenn, Slovic & Mertz, 1994). Whilting et al. (1975) also support the notion that giving generally was greater for girls than boys across different cultures, although these differences were significant for older but not younger children. Esienberg (2006) has suggested that women display more empathy and guilt, and men are more likely to intervene in an emergency. According to Batson & Powell (2003), men have evolved a fight or flight response to threatening situations; so they take a protective role. This is called nurturing versus heroic altruism. Also, men may behave heroically compared with male stereotypes that have been acquired through socialization.

Whiting et al (1975) found that men may help because the cost of helping is low and the cost of not helping is high. They are expected to help in an emergency situation and may be negatively evaluated if they do not. A number of researchers have found gender difference for perceived risk (Flynn, Solvic and Mertz, 1994), and indeed, it has been argued that males are more likely to take risks than females (Byrnes, Miller and Schafer, 1999). In fact, Byrness et al. (1999) found that males took more risks even when it was obviously a bad idea to take risks in the context of perceived risk and environmental issues. Byrnes et al (1999) also found females reported significantly higher perceived risk scores for arrangement of environmental hazards than males.

Given these findings, they concluded that the manner in which people evaluated the risk associated with engaging in positive social issue behaviour may be related to some extent to their gender. Commonly held stereotypes and popular culture suggest that women have a greater capacity for understanding others' thoughts and feelings than do men (Batson & Shaw, 1991). Further research indicates the possibility that these differences may be the result of motivation rather than ability (Batson and Powell, 2003).

### **Antecedents of Pro-social Behaviour**

Various articles have been written on the antecedent factors of pro-social behaviour. For the purpose of this article the authors wish to categorise these under the following: cultural factors, situational factors, psychological factors and gender factors. Generally,

previous writers found that cultural differences in relation to pro-social behaviour are expressed differently between individualistic and collectivistic societies. For instance, someone living in the U.S is more in need than someone living in Australia, India or Nigeria. Collectivist cultures tend to have extended family structure in which children take responsibility for younger siblings from an early age (Whiting & Whiting, 1975). According to Whiting and Whiting (1975), individualist and collectivist cultures help others for different reasons. For individualist society, helping is motivated by personal rewards, such as feeling good about oneself. For collectivist societies, helping is motivated by continued survival of group.

Under situational factors, Zhan and Smith (1992) investigated differences between people in two cities and four small towns in Turkey. A variety of methods were used to assess helpfulness such as willingness to change money or participate in a short interview. It was found that helpfulness was higher for people in small towns than for people in large cities. Based on his information overload theory, Eisenberg (2006) found that people in urban environments, e.g. large cities, are exposed to excessive environmental stimulation and are so familiar with emergencies that they treat them as everyday events. To cope with this high level of stimulation, people screen out events that are not personally relevant to them. This results in people in urban areas having a more indifferent attitude to others' needs, causing lower levels of pro-social behaviour. What one learns from Eisenberg (2006) here is that people living in the city areas are constantly being bombarded by simulation and that they keep to themselves to avoid being overwhelmed by it.

Under psychological factors, Banabau and Tirole (2003), identified:

1. Intrinsic
2. Extrinsic
3. Reputational motivation

According to them, intrinsic motivation is defined as the inner good feelings of the individual associated with pro-social behaviour act. This feeling is represented by the wellbeing of others, such as altruism. Altruism is an example of intrinsic motivation. Extrinsic motivation represents material reward, such as financial compensation or a more indifferent attitude to others' needs, causing lower levels of pro-social behaviour.

Reputational motivation refers to the aspect of public recognition on the decision of the individual to make a donation, whether individuals are interested in improving their social image in a community; whether they give expecting something in return; or whether they are ashamed to be perceived as selfish by others. Studies emphasized the aspect of striving to sign traits that are deemed as good within a community on the decision of the individual to give. An individual will make charitable contributions only if this action sends the right message to his/her immediate network of friends. This action either represents his/her trademark image or improves his/her overall perception in the community. In the same way that individuals learn to be concerned with how others perceive them, they also learn to be concerned with the way they see themselves according to Akerlof and Kroton (2000).

### Pro-Social Behaviour and Tertiary Institutions

Eisenberg et al. (1990) linked pro-social behaviour to the moral education of undergraduates and the construction of campus culture, the cultivation of social and spiritual civilization, and the building of a harmonious society. We add that the result will be a school climate of harmony and a related sense of association to the university authorities and among fellow students. We see an environment of less examination malpractices, unruly class behaviour, disobedience, violent behaviour, anti-social acts and disciplinary referrals. We predict students in such environment to be responsible and productive members of the school community, exhibiting a culture of maintenance of school property and ready to engage in voluntary activities.

## Result

### Demographic Information of Respondents

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

| S/No | Item   | Frequency | Percentage% |
|------|--------|-----------|-------------|
| 1    | Male   | 153       | 49.5        |
| 2    | Female | 156       | 50.5        |
|      | Total  | 309       | 100.00      |

Table 1 shows that 153 (49.5%) of respondents were male, while 156 (50.5%) were female.

Table 2: Socio-Economic Status of Respondents

| S/No | Item    | Frequency | Percentage% |
|------|---------|-----------|-------------|
| 1    | High    | 65        | 21.0        |
| 2    | Average | 113       | 36.6        |
| 3    | Low     | 131       | 42.1        |
|      | Total   | 309       | 100.00      |

Table two above shows that 65 (21.0%) of the respondents had high socio-economic status, 113 (36.6%) were of average, while 131 (42.1%) were of low socio-economic status.

Table 3: Marital Status

| S/No | Item     | Frequency | Percentage% |
|------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| 1    | Single   | 150       | 48.5        |
| 2    | Married  | 147       | 47.6        |
| 3    | Divorced | 12        | 3.9         |
|      | Total    | 309       | 100.00      |

Table 3 above shows that 150 (48.5%) were single, 147 (47.6%) were married, while 12 (3.9%) were divorced.

### Hypotheses Testing

**Hypothesis 1:** This hypothesis states that there will be a significant influence of gender on pro-social behaviour among students in tertiary institutions in Benue State. This hypothesis was tested using independent t-test and the result is presented in table 5 below:

Result in table 5 below shows that there was a significant gender difference in pro-social behaviour among students of tertiary institutions in Benue State [ $t(307) = 3.721$ ,  $p < .05$ ]. Observation of mean difference shows that male students [mean = 65.84; 3.721  $P < .051$ ]. Observation of mean difference shows that male students (mean = 65.84; SD = 11.9) significantly scored higher than their female counterparts (mean = 64.88; SD = 11.22) on pro-social behaviour. Based on the result, hypothesis one which states that there will be a significant influence of gender on pro-social behaviour among students in tertiary institutions in Benue State was therefore accepted. Also, researchers such as Gayla (1989), Eisenberg & Murphy (2008), Byrnes et al. (1999) found that females scored significantly higher in pro-social behaviour than males. But in this study, males

Table 5: Independent t-test summary table showing gender difference on pro-social behaviour among students

| DV                   | Group  | N   | Mean  | SD    | SE   | T    | df  | P    |
|----------------------|--------|-----|-------|-------|------|------|-----|------|
| prosocial behaviour  | Male   | 153 | 65.84 | 11.99 | .969 | 3.72 | 307 | <.05 |
|                      | Female | 156 | 64.88 | 11.22 | .898 |      |     |      |
| <sup>xx</sup> Sig at | 0.001  |     |       |       |      |      |     |      |

have more pro-social behaviour as the mean value is more than females.

Notwithstanding this, this study reveals that gender is an important element of human pro-sociality as the mechanisms stimulating or inhibiting social behaviour seem to differ across male and female subjects. This should not be a surprise, since their social roles have differed for the most part of human history and depending on the social context; different behaviours are expected from men and women in virtually all cultures around the globe (Eagly, 2013). One implication of this study is that, women, rather than being more pro-social, may appear more pro-social in some studies as a result of the details of the experimental design (even if the manipulation only affects males), but both genders behave equally when the context is experimentally neutral, derived of a frame. These findings and female behaviour within treatments and suggest that the role of gender should be investigated further. The present evidence supports Croson and Gneezy (2009) in that women care more about the social context. However, this result contrasts with their main conclusion and the common belief in the experimental literature summarized by Croson and Gneezy (2009), "Situationally specific than those of men women are neither more or less socially oriented but their social preferences are more

malleable". The current research illustrates that the social behaviour of both genders is malleable, but each responds to different details of the context. Females react more to aspects of social framing, whereas males are more affected by reflection-related manipulations.

### Hypothesis 2

This hypothesis stated that there will be a significant difference in socio-cultural factors on pro-social behaviour among students of tertiary institutions in Benue State. This hypothesis was tested using one-way analysis of variance and the result is presented in table 6.

Result in table 6 shows that there was a significant effect of socio-cultural factors on pro-social behaviour among students in tertiary institutions in Benue State [ $F(3,305)=4.357$ ;  $P<.051$ ]. Based on this result, hypothesis two which stated that there will be a significant difference in socio-cultural factors on pro-social behaviour among students of tertiary institutions in Benue State was therefore accepted.

Levine et al. (2001) found that people in cultures that value sympathies were more likely to help in a variety of nonemergency helping situations (Aronson, Willson and Akert, 2010).

Table 6: One way analysis of variance summary table showing the influence of socio-cultural factors on pro-social behaviour among students

| DV     | Group | N       | Mean      | SD  | t     | df    | P    |
|--------|-------|---------|-----------|-----|-------|-------|------|
| Tiv    | 150   | 65.9800 | 11.84.773 | 150 | 4.357 | 3.305 | <.05 |
| Idoma  | 131   | 64.9966 | 11.61783  | 131 |       |       |      |
| Igede  | 16    | 64.3750 | 4.20912   | 76  |       |       |      |
| Others | 12    | 63.3333 | 15.19769  | 12  |       |       |      |
| Total  | 309   | 65.3560 | 11.59557  | 309 |       |       |      |

Table 7: Univariate analysis of variance summary table showing the interactive effect of gender and socio-cultural factors on pro-social behaviour among students

| Source           | Type III SSQ | Df  | Mean Square | F     | Sig  | n    |
|------------------|--------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|------|
| Gender           | 96.098       | 1   | 96.098      | .709  | .400 | .002 |
| Ethnicity        | 139.690      | 3   | 46.563      | .343  | .794 | .003 |
| Gender Ethnicity | X279.939     | 2   | 139.970     | 1.032 | .357 | .007 |
| Error            | .40938.90    | 302 | 135.559     |       |      |      |
| Table            | 1361277.00   | 309 |             |       |      |      |

### Hypothesis 3

This hypothesis stated that there will be significant interactive effect of gender and socio-cultural factors on pro-social behaviour among students in tertiary institutions in Benue State. To test this hypothesis, univariate analysis of variance was conducted and the result is presented in table 7.

Result in table 7 shows that there was significant interactive effect of gender on socio-cultural factors on pro-social behaviour among students of tertiary institutions in Benue State [ $F(2,302) = 1.033$ ;  $P < .051$ ]. Based on this result, hypothesis three which stated that there will be a significant interactive effect of gender and socio-cultural factors on pro-social behaviour among students in tertiary institutions in Benue State was therefore accepted. This finding is supported by Flynn and Solvic (1994) that females have more altruistic tendencies; however males prefer to behave pro-socially in some areas. Based on stereotypic gender roles, females generally are expected to be relatively more independent and achievement oriented.

### Conclusion

The pro-sociality in an individual is very important during the growing stage. This is because pro-social behaviour is the foundation of social interaction within family, peers, and friends. It also encourages helping behaviour to be nurtured in human. An adolescents social sphere develops rapidly as they distinguish the differences between friends and acquaintance; they often become heavily emotionally invested in friends. Relationships are vital in the social development of an adolescent due to the extreme influence peers can have over all individuals. These relationships become vital because they begin to help the adolescent understand the concept of personality, how they form and why a person has that specific type

of personality, peer groups offer opportunities to the member to develop social skills such as empathy, sharing and leadership.

Adolescents whose best friends display pro-social behaviours are also tend to engage in such behaviours themselves. Based on this findings of this research, we can conclusively say that:

1. Gender has a significant impact on the pro-social behaviour among students in tertiary institutions of Benue State.
2. Socio-cultural factors have significant influence on the pro-social behaviour of students in tertiary institutions of Benue State.
3. There exist significant interactive effect of gender and socio-cultural factors on pro-social behaviour among students in tertiary institutions in Benue State.

### Recommendations

This research, based on findings, recommends that:

1. Institutions in Benue State should give their students an opportunity to work collaboratively in small groups and participate in activities designed to promote social understanding.
2. There should also be opportunities for training designed to teach social problem solving skills and to reduce peer rejection.
3. Effective cognitive behavioural therapy should also be put in place to increase possibility in students with several antisocial behaviour.

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